

## RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEER FOR THE DISASTER ACTION TEAM



Every day, the American Red Cross relies on volunteer Disaster Action Team members to respond to disasters that threaten our citizens, including fires, floods and hurricanes. In the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, however, both the Red Cross and the Department of Health and Human Services came to realize that it is prudent to have a second tier of trained volunteers ready to assist in future disasters.

In response, the Department and the Red Cross initiated a joint project to provide free Red Cross training to any interested Department employee. To date, more than 170 staff have been trained. The project is now being offered to retired State of New Hampshire employees willing to assist victims of a disaster.

With minimal additional training, you could enroll as a regular Red Cross volunteer or as a member of the "Disaster Reserve Team". As a regular Red Cross

volunteer you would be able to respond to emergencies, such as a residential fire in your community. As a trained member of the "Disaster Reserve Team", you could be called on to volunteer to assist regular Red Cross disaster relief workers during a large-scale emergency or disaster, which strikes our state.

Two sessions of *Introduction to Disaster Services* are scheduled *specifically* for State of New Hampshire retirees. The course will give you a behind-the-scenes look at how disasters impact people, how communities respond, and the role Red Cross Disaster Services plays in responding to emergency situations. The course will be held:

- Tuesday, July 23, at 1 PM - 4 PM Brown Building Auditorium, Concord
- Wednesday, Aug. 7, at 9 AM - 12 AM Brown Building Auditorium, Concord

To attend, contact the Concord Area Red Cross via e-mail at: [coombsd@redcross-concordnh.org](mailto:coombsd@redcross-concordnh.org), or by phone at 1-800 464-6692 indicating which session you

will participate in. Space is limited, so respond quickly.

In upcoming months additional introductory sessions will be offered, as well as more advanced disaster training in the areas of health services, mental health, family services and mass care. Note, however, that *Introduction to Disaster Services* is a prerequisite for all advanced courses.

During his recent State of the Union address, President Bush called upon every American to foster a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility; challenging them to commit to serving others. By becoming a member of the Red Cross Disaster Reserve Team, you will be answering this call to service by strengthening the ability of the American Red Cross to protect our homeland and to support our communities. In a world that has been forever changed by last years's terrorist attacks, you are encouraged to partake in this special training opportunity.

The New Hampshire Retirement System  
4 Chenell Drive  
Concord, NH 03301-8509

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# The Retirement Connection

A newsletter for retired New Hampshire Retirement System members • Summer 2002 • Number 4

## COLAs

The cost-of-living adjustments are granted by the Fiscal Committee of the New Hampshire Legislature.

They become a permanent addition to a retired member's pension. Members are entitled to receive a COLA if they have been retired for *at least* 12

months prior to July 1, 2002. Any beneficiary of such a member is also eligible.

Members whose effective date of retirement was on or before July 1, 2001, are eligible for the COLA increase. COLA's are retroactive to one's most recent retirement anniversary date. However, for those

who retired on July 1, there is no retroactive payment as July is the most recent retirement anniversary date. The following example details how a member may qualify for a retroactive COLA:

• A member, who retired on April 1, 2001, has been retired for 15 months. Effective July 1, 2002, that member is eligible for the new COLA rate. That member's July pension check will include the COLA as well as a one-time retroactive payment of the COLA back to April 1, 2002, which is that member's most recent retirement anniversary date. The retiree's next payment issued on

### New COLAs

Effective July 1, 2002

- 2% - Employees and Police
- 3% - Teachers & Firefighters

retiree's next payment issued on

August 30, 2002, will represent their *new* total benefit, which includes the new COLA rate.

**NOTE:** It is possible that some retired members, who are eligible for the COLA increase, may not see a net increase in their monthly benefit. One reason might be that the cost of some medical insurance premiums have increased at a faster rate than the medical subsidy and the COLA. Changes in federal withholding taxes can be another reason for benefits to be less than expected (see article on page 2, *Your Tax Status*).

**FIREFIGHTERS:** There was a special 5% COLA for Firefighters who retired on or before July 1, 1994. The first payment was in the March 2002 checks, retroactive to January 2001. (SB 115 - Chapter 2).

## SUBSIDY HIGHLIGHTS

MEDICAL

### New Medical Subsidy Monthly Rates

The Medical subsidy rates, in effect as of July 1, 2002, are listed in the following chart. The rates increase by 8% each year and are based on NHRS' fiscal year of July 1st - June 30th.

July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003

Type of Plan	Rate
1 Person	\$255.60
2 Person	\$511.20
1 Person Medicare Supplement	\$161.19
2 Person Medicare Supplement	\$322.38

### Change in Marital or Family Status

NHRS and former employers must be notified of the following:

- The retired member's divorce
- Remarriage of a surviving spouse who is receiving an ordinary or accidental death benefit
- Death of a qualified person

If you are a former state employee, please notify NHRS. If you retired from a municipal, county, school district, or other political subdivision, please notify *that* employer. **NOTE:** Failure to notify NHRS may result in a recovery of overpayments.

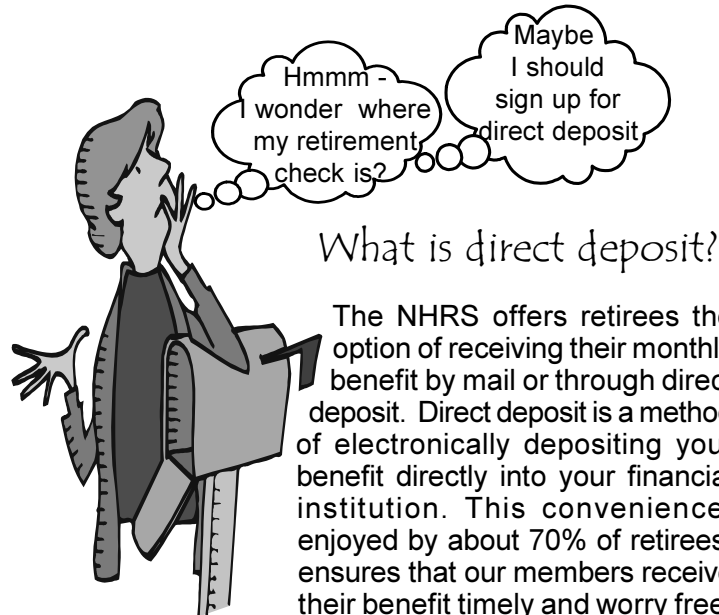
## YOUR TAX STATUS

You may experience changes in your federal income tax deduction, for the following reasons:

- A change in the tax withholding table, which occurs every January, and possibly at other times of the year, as dictated by the federal government
- A COLA increase or raise in taxable earnings, possibly placing you in a different tax bracket

You might want to have additional monies taken out of your retirement benefit, to help offset your tax liability. NHRS will provide you with a W-4P form, which will update your tax filing status. The NHRS cannot assist you in determining your tax liability or how much you should have withheld. However, if you would like help in how to complete the W-4P form, please contact the annuity department, at x241.

**"Tax Bite Too Big?"**



What is direct deposit?

The NHRS offers retirees the option of receiving their monthly benefit by mail or through direct deposit. Direct deposit is a method of electronically depositing your benefit directly into your financial institution. This convenience, enjoyed by about 70% of retirees, ensures that our members receive their benefit timely and worry free.

If you do not elect the direct deposit program, your check will be mailed to your address, currently on file with NHRS. If you elect direct deposit, you will have access to your money sooner and will not have to wait for it to arrive in the mail.



## CHANGED YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS?

To receive a Change of Address/Name form:

- Contact NHRS, at (603)271-3351x272, or
- Download the form from the NHRS website: [www.state.nh.us/retirement](http://www.state.nh.us/retirement)

### New Hampshire Retirement System

4 Chenell Drive  
Concord, NH 03301-8509  
603-271-3351 or toll-free: 877-917-6477

#### Extensions for NHRS services :

Retirement Pension Questions.....x281  
Medical Subsidy.....x242 or 243  
General Information and Publications.....x272

[www.state.nh.us/retirement](http://www.state.nh.us/retirement)

## MEDICARE B

... an important decision

If you are age 65 or older, you could be eligible for Medicare coverage. There is no monthly premium for the Medicare hospital insurance (Part A), but there is a premium for the Medicare medical insurance (Part B), which is deducted from your monthly social security check.

You are given the option to accept Part B, or not. If you choose not to accept Part B, and you have coverage through another insurance carrier - they may only pay the balance of what Medicare B would have paid, had you chosen it. *You* could be responsible for the unpaid portion. The majority of insurance carriers will not provide a supplemental plan unless the subscriber has both Part A and Part B of Medicare.

Please check with your insurance carrier, before you decide not to accept Medicare Part B.

If you are on *Social Security Disability*, you will be enrolled in Medicare after receiving disability benefits for two years. Please contact NHRS upon becoming Medicare eligible, as we are unable to determine who is receiving these benefits. If you are qualified for a Medical Subsidy,

**Medicare's Internet Website**  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

**Medicare's Toll-Free Number**  
1-800-633-4227

the amount of your subsidy will be changed to the related Medicare amount.

## DIRECT DEPOSIT, FAST AND EASY!

### What is the disadvantage of receiving your benefit by mail?

*Delays* - you risk delays in the availability of your benefit, resulting from mail delays or lost/stolen checks. NHRS does not place a stop payment on a check until a written request is received. It generally takes an additional 7 to 10 days for NHRS to issue a replacement check.

### What are the advantages of direct deposit?

*Convenience* - there is no need for you to make a trip to your financial institution, as your retirement benefit is deposited directly into your account

*Dependable* - your funds are immediately available to you.

*Safe* - there is no chance of a lost or stolen check.

### When are deposits made?

NHRS makes direct deposits on the last business day of each month.

### Will I receive a statement?

Each month you will receive, by mail, a non-negotiable check advice detailing the amount that was electronically transferred to your financial institution that month. This

non-negotiable check advice will also provide important details of earnings, information and any deductions taken from your retirement payment that month.

### What if I change my banking information?

If you change your bank or bank account number, call NHRS immediately and request a new *Electronic Direct Deposit Authorization* form (EDDAUTH). This form can also be downloaded from our website, at [www.state.nh.us/retirement](http://www.state.nh.us/retirement). Complete the form and attach a voided check with your new account information and return it to NHRS.

Any changes in banking information will require a new pre-note test of the delivery, during which time checks will be mailed to your address, currently on file with NHRS.

### How can I participate?

You must complete the *Electronic Direct Deposit Authorization for Retirees* form below, and mail it to the NH Retirement System, 4 Chenell Drive, Concord, NH 03301-8509.

NHRS encourages all retirees to take advantage of the speed and safety of direct deposits.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

4 Chenell Drive, Concord, NH 03301-8509  
(603) 271-3351 or toll-free: (603) 877-917-6477

### Check One

- ☐ New  
☐ Change  
☐ Delete

## ELECTRONIC DIRECT DEPOSIT AUTHORIZATION FOR RETIREES

PLEASE PRINT

LAST NAME	<input type="text"/>	FIRST NAME	<input type="text"/>	MI	<input type="text"/>
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> — <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> — <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>					

I hereby authorize the New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS) to make net payroll deposits to my account as indicated below. NOTE: It takes 45 to 60 days from the date NHRS receives your direct deposit form, because there must be a "pre-note" test of the delivery first. This means that you will receive at least one payment by mail. Upon successful completion of the pre-note process, the following month's payment will be automatically deposited in your account.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION (not available in foreign countries)	Check One
TRANSIT ROUTING NUMBER AND ACCOUNT NUMBER	<input type="checkbox"/> Savings
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Checking
Example: 0000000000 0000000000 (Lower lefthand corner of check)	
Attach a voided check here - this will be used to verify your bank transit routing and account number	
YOUR SIGNATURE	DATE